

## On the Holy Rosary of the Blessed Virgin Mary

(*Ingravescentibus malis*)

*The Encyclical Letter Issued by His Holiness, Pope Pius XI, on the  
Feast of the Dedication of St. Michael the Archangel, September  
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**M**ORE than once have We asserted—and We recently repeated this in the Encyclical Letter *Divini Redemptoris* (*Acta Ap. Sedis*, 1937, Vol. XXIX, p. 65)—that there is no remedy for the ever-growing evils of our times except a return to Our Lord Jesus Christ and to His most holy precepts. Truly, only He “hath the words of eternal life” (*Cf. John, vi, 69*), and individuals and society can only fall into immediate and miserable ruin if they ignore the majesty of God and repudiate His Law.

However, anyone who studies with diligence the records of the Catholic Church will easily recognize that the true patronage of the Virgin Mother of God is linked with all the annals of the Christian name. When, in fact, errors everywhere diffused were bent upon rending the seamless robe of the Church and upon throwing the Catholic world into confusion, our fathers turned with confident soul to her “alone who destroys all heresies in the world” (*Roman Breviary*), and the victory won through her brought the return of tranquillity.

### POWER AGAINST INFIDELS

When the impious Mohammedan power, trusting in its powerful fleet and war-hardened armies, threatened the peoples of Europe with ruin and slavery, then—upon the suggestion of the Sovereign Pontiff—the protection of the heavenly Mother was fervently implored and the enemy was defeated and his ships sunk. Thus the Faithful of every age, both in public misfortune and in private need, turn in supplication to Mary, the benignant, so that she may come to their aid and grant help and remedy against sorrows of body and soul.

And never was her most powerful aid hoped for in vain by those who besought it with pious and trustful prayer.

But also in our day, dangers no less grave than in the past beset civil and religious society. In fact, because the supreme and eternal authority of God, which commands and forbids, is despised and completely repudiated by men, the result is that the consciousness of Christian duty is weakened, and that faith becomes tepid in souls or entirely lost, and this afterward affects and ruins the very basis of human society.

#### EVILS OF BOTH SIDES

Thus on the one hand are seen citizens intent on an atrocious struggle among themselves because some are provided with abundant riches and others must gain bread for themselves and their dear ones by the sweat of their brows. Indeed, as we all know, in some regions the evil has reached such a pitch that it seeks to destroy all private right of property, so that everything might be shared in common.

On the other hand, there are not lacking men who declare that they honor and exalt, above all, the power of the State. They say they must use every means to assure civil order and enforce authority, and pretend that only thus are they able totally to repulse the execrable theories of the Communists. However, they despise the light of evangelic wisdom and endeavor to revive the errors of the pagans and their way of life.

To this is added the clever and lamentable sect of those who, denying and hating God, declare themselves the enemies of the Eternal, and who insinuate themselves everywhere. They discredit and uproot all religious belief from souls. Finally, they trample on every human and Divine right. And while they cast scorn on the hope of heavenly reward, they incite men to seek, even by illicit means, false earthly happiness, and therefore drive them with brazen temerity to the dissolution of the social order, causing disorder, cruel rebellions and even the conflagration of civil war.

#### MUST NOT LOSE HEART

Nevertheless, Venerable Brethren, though such great and numerous evils hang over us, and others still greater are to

be feared for the future, we must not lose heart nor let the confident hope that rests solely on God become fainter. He who "made the nations of the earth for health" (Cf. Wisdom i, 14) without doubt will not let those perish whom He has redeemed with His Precious Blood, nor will He abandon His Church. But rather, as We said in the beginning, shall We beseech God through the mediation of the Blessed Virgin, so acceptable to Him, since, to use the words of St. Bernard: "Such is the will of God, who has wished that we should have all things through Mary." (Sermon on the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary.)

Among the various supplications with which we successfully appeal to the Virgin Mother of God, the Holy Rosary without doubt occupies a special and distinct place. This prayer, which some call the *Psalter of the Virgin* or *Breviary of the Gospel and of Christian life*, was described and recommended by Our Predecessor of happy memory, Leo XIII, with these vigorous passages: "Very admirable is this crown interwoven with the angelic salutation which is interposed in the Sunday prayer, and unites with it the obligation of interior meditation. It is an excellent manner of praying . . . and very useful for the attainment of immortal life" (*Acta Leonis*, 1898, Vol. XVIII, pp. 154, 155).

#### EXCELLENCIES OF THE ROSARY

And this can well be deduced from the very flowers that form this mystic garland. What prayers in fact can be found more adaptable and holy? The first is that which our Divine Redeemer Himself pronounced when His disciples asked Him: "Lord, teach us to pray" (Luke xi, 1); a very holy supplication which both offers us the way—as far as it is possible for us—to render glory to God, and also takes into account all the necessities of our body and soul. How can the Eternal Father, when prayed to with the very words of His Son, refuse to come to our aid?

The other prayer is the Angelic Salutation, which begins with the eulogies of the Archangel Gabriel and of St. Elizabeth, and ends with that very pious supplication by which we beg the help of the Blessed Virgin now and at the hour of our death. To these invocations, said aloud, is added the contemplation of the sacred mysteries, through which they place, as it were, under our eyes the joys, sorrows and

triumphs of Jesus Christ and of His Mother, so that we receive relief and comfort in our sorrows. Following those most holy examples, we ascend to the happiness of the heavenly country by steps of ever higher virtue.

This practise of piety, Venerable Brethren, admirably diffused by St. Dominic, not without the heavenly suggestion and inspiration of the Virgin Mother of God, is without doubt easy for all, even for the ignorant and the simple. But those wander from the path of truth who consider this devotion merely an annoying formula repeated with monotonous singsong intonation, and refuse it as good only for children and silly women!

#### REVERED AS MODE OF PRAYER

In this regard, it is to be noted that both piety and love, though always renewing the same words, do not always repeat the same thing, but always express something new issuing from the intimate sentiment of devotion. And besides, this mode of prayer has the perfume of evangelic simplicity and requires humility of spirit; and, if we disdain humility, as the Divine Redeemer teaches, it will be impossible for us to enter the heavenly kingdom: "Amen, I say to you, unless you become as little children you shall not enter the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. xviii, 3).

Nevertheless, if men in our century, with its derisive pride, refuse the Holy Rosary, there is an innumerable multitude of holy men of every age and every condition who have always held it dear. They have recited it with great devotion, and in every moment they have used it as a powerful weapon to put the demons to flight, to preserve the integrity of life, to acquire virtue more easily, and in a word to attain real peace among men.

Nor are there lacking men famous as to doctrine and wisdom who, although intensely occupied in scientific study and researches, never even for a day fail to pray fervently on bended knee, before the image of the Virgin, in this most pious form. Thus kings and princes, however burdened with most urgent occupations and affairs, made it their duty to recite the Rosary.

This mystic crown, then, not only is found in and glides through the hands of the poor, but it also is honored by citizens of every social rank. And We do not wish here to pass

over in silence the fact that the Blessed Virgin herself, even in our times, has solicitously recommended this manner of prayer, when she appeared and taught it to the innocent girl in the Grotto of Lourdes.

#### SPECIAL OCTOBER DEVOTION

Therefore why should We not hope for every grace if We supplicate Our Heavenly Mother in this manner with due disposition and holiness? We desire very earnestly, Venerable Brethren, that the Holy Rosary should be recited in a special manner in the month of October and with increased devotion both in the churches and in homes.

And so much the more must it be done since the enemies of the Divine Name—that is, those who have rebelled against and denied and scorned the Eternal God—spread snares for the Catholic Faith and the liberty due to the Church, and finally rebel with insane efforts against divine and human rights, to send mankind to ruin and perdition. Through efficacious recourse to the Virgin Mother of God, they may be finally bent and led to penance and return to the straight path, trusting to the care and protection of Mary.

The Holy Virgin who once victoriously drove the terrible sect of the Albigenses from Christian countries, now suppliantly invoked by us, will turn aside the new errors, especially those of Communism, which reminds us in many ways, in its motives and misdeeds, of the ancient ones.

And as in the times of the Crusades, in all Europe there was raised one voice of the people, one supplication; so today, in all the world, the cities, and even the smallest villages, united with courage and strength, with filial and constant insistence, the people seek to obtain from the great Mother of God the defeat of the enemies of Christian and human civilization, to the end that true peace may shine again over tired and erring men.

#### CALMING PRESENT TEMPEST

If, then, all will do this with due disposition, with great faith and with fervent piety, it is right to hope that as in the past, so in our day, the Blessed Virgin will obtain from her divine Son that the waves of the present tempests be calmed

and that a brilliant victory crown this rivalry of Christians in prayer.

The Holy Rosary, besides, not only serves admirably to overcome the enemies of God and Religion, but is also a stimulus and spur to the practise of evangelic virtues which it injects and cultivates in our souls. Above all, it nourishes the Catholic Faith, which flourishes again by due meditation on the sacred mysteries, and raises minds to the truth revealed to us by God.

Every one can understand how salutary it is, especially in our times wherein sometimes a certain annoyance of the things of the spirit is felt even among the Faithful, and a dislike, as it were, for the Christian doctrine. Therefore, revive the hope of immortal welfare, while the triumph of Jesus Christ and of His Mother, meditated on by us in the last part of the Rosary, shows us Heaven open and invites us to the conquest of the Eternal Country.

Thus while an unbridled longing for the things of this earth has penetrated into the hearts of mortals and each one more ardently longs for the short-lived riches and ephemeral pleasures, all feel a fruitful call back to the heavenly treasures "where thieves do not break in and neither rust nor moth doth consume" (Matt. xii, 33), and to the wealth that will never perish.

#### REKINDLING CHARITY

And the charity which has been weakened and cooled in many, how can it fail to be rekindled into love in the souls of those who recall with a full heart the tortures and death of our Redeemer and the afflictions of His Sorrowful Mother? From this charity towards God, then, there cannot but rise a more intense love of one's neighbor if one dwells on the labors and sorrows that Our Lord suffered for all, reinstating the lost inheritance of the children of God.

Therefore see to it, Venerable Brethren, that such a fruitful practice shall be more diffused, more highly esteemed by all, and that common piety be increased. Through your work and that of the priests who help you in the care of souls, its praises and advantages shall be preached and repeated to the Faithful of every social class.

From it, the young will draw fresh energy with which to control the rebellious tendencies to evil and to preserve in-

tact the stainless purity of the soul; also in it, the old will again find repose, relief and peace from their anxious cares. To those who devote themselves to Catholic Action may it be a spur to impel them to a more fervent and active work of apostolate; and to all those who suffer in any way, especially the dying, may it bring comfort and increase the hope of eternal happiness.

#### FAMILIES IN PARTICULAR

The fathers and mothers of families particularly must give an example to their children, especially when, at sunset, they gather together after the day's work, within the domestic walls, and recite the Holy Rosary on bended knees before the image of the Virgin, together fusing voice, faith and sentiment. This is a beautiful and salutary custom, from which certainly there cannot but be derived tranquillity and abundance of heavenly gifts for the household.

When very frequently We receive newly-married couples in audience and address paternal words to them, We give them rosaries, We recommend these to them earnestly, and We exhort them, citing Our own example, not to let even one day pass without saying the Rosary, no matter how burdened they may be with many cares and labors.

For these reasons, Venerable Brethren, We have thought fit earnestly to exhort you, and through you, all the Faithful, to carry out this pious practise. Nor do We doubt that you, listening, with your usual response to Our paternal invitation will bring about abundant fruits once more.

#### THANKS FOR BETTER HEALTH

And in addressing this Encyclical to you, another motive impels Us. We wish that, together with Us, Our many children in Jesus Christ shall unite and render thanks to the Mother of God for the better health We have happily regained.

This grace, as We have had occasion to write (*Cf.* Letter to Cardinal E. Pacelli, *Osservatore Romano*, September 5, 1937), We attribute to the special intercession of the virgin of Lisieux, St. Teresa of the Child Jesus. But We know, though, that everything comes to us from Almighty God through the hands of Our Lady.

And lastly, as there has been launched in the public press

with rash insolence, a very grave injury to the Blessed Virgin, We cannot do less than profit by this occasion to offer, together with the Episcopate and the people of that nation which venerates Mary as "Queen of the Kingdom of Poland," and with the homage of our piety, due reparation to the august Queen, and denounce to the whole world this sacrilege committed with impunity, as a painful and unworthy thing.

Meanwhile, with a full heart We impart to you, Venerable Brethren, and to the flock entrusted to the care of each of you, the Apostolic Blessing as an augury of heavenly graces and in token to Our Paternal benevolence.

Given at Castel Gandolfo, near Rome, on the 29th day of the month of September, on the Feast of the Dedication of St. Michael the Archangel, in the year 1937, the sixteenth of Our Pontificate.

PIUS PP., XI.

## **Parish School Miracle of Generous Faith**

MOST REV. AMLETO GIOVANNI CICOGNANI

*Address Delivered by the Apostolic Delegate Before the Third National Catechetical Congress of the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine in St. Louis, Mo., October 10, 1937. As issued by the N. C. W. C.*

ON the fourteenth of last August the Holy Father, receiving in audience a group of American children, students of our parochial schools, was pleased to emphasize the importance of these schools in the nation: he said that he could not find words adequate to praise the efforts made by the Faithful to maintain them. He expressed the hope that even the smallest and poorest church might have its school, and added that if he had to choose between a church and a school he would be at a loss how to choose, because, while without doubt the church ought to receive the preference, there are countless considerations in favor of the school, inasmuch as it is the Christian school that teaches what the Church is.



## GLORY OF CATHOLICISM

It is to the great glory of Catholicism in the United States that it is to be found in the vanguard in this respect: out of 12,776 parishes, 7,445 have parochial schools, a miracle of generosity and of faith, so great and so enterprising as to encourage the best grounded hopes that the number is still to increase, to the great benefit of our youth and to the edification of Christian nations.

Without doubt the parochial school is a fundamental part of the "School of Christ," the school which has made Christian civilization, the civilization of this nation. To the school of Christ, as vital for the soul as food for the body, the American Episcopate has desired to make a new, a priceless contribution, by establishing the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine, whose object in addition to strengthening evermore the parochial schools, is to provide for the Christian way of living, by various methods of teaching, for the benefit of localities and persons outside these schools.

The Holy Father confessed to embarrassment in choosing between a church and a parochial school. Evidently such embarrassment is only increased if a comparison is instituted between the church and the school of Christ. This school constitutes the fundamental reason for our priestly ministry: it is included in the command of the Bishop, when he assigns priests to a parish either as pastors or assistants; the need of such a school is absolutely urgent, particularly in our day when we find it bitterly opposed by new forms of paganism and of atheistic Communism.

The Church of itself would be of little avail, if the school of Christ were neglected; nor could we console ourselves by thinking of the great number of the Faithful that attend Church, when a greater number remained outside, deprived of all Christian teaching. An element of practical importance and of stimulus to pastoral zeal would be to secure statistics on the number of those who do not go to Church, rather than of those who do.

## OBJECT OF CONFRATERNITY

The Confraternity of Christian Doctrine has taken account of the number of Catholic children who do not attend our parochial schools and besides of adults, Catholic and

non-Catholic, who desire to be instructed in religious truths, and has wisely planned its program, which the Supreme Pontiff has paternally blessed and warmly recommended.

Its objects are:

1. Religious training of Catholic elementary-school children not attending Catholic schools, vacation schools and instruction classes during the school year;

2. Religious instruction of Catholic youths of high school age not attending Catholic schools, in suitable study clubs and by other successful methods;

3. Religious study clubs for adult groups; inquiry classes for non-Catholics;

4. Religious education of children by parents in the home. This program fills up many gaps, supplies means that are suitable, timely and necessary; it shows how to carry out more broadly the commandment given us by Jesus Christ: "Teach ye all nations"; the precise meaning of this divine command is, "Make all nations your disciples, have them enter my school, and of my teaching be you, O my priests, the teachers, the expounders, the propagators, the apostles." A noble commission, a sublime authorization! This commission does not proceed from human institutions, neither from universities nor scientific centers, no matter how highly regarded, nor from magistrates or civil authorities however eminent they may be. This commission is given by the Divine Redeemer; He has made us teachers and He has ordered us to teach not material things, human science or literature or anything else no matter how noble, but God, the Knowledge of Him, eternal life, His Decalogue, the obligations and rights of man, the Church, the means of sanctification, in a word, that sacred deposit of faith which has for its object the attainment of the supreme acquisition, eternal life.

#### GREAT DANGERS OF OUR TIME

The necessity of intensifying this magisterium has never been felt so urgently and impellingly as in our day. We know that "The gates of hell shall not prevail"; but it is only too evident that the faith of many is in jeopardy; the civil foundations of the nations of the world are in jeopardy, and even reason itself. While in fact man at all times and in all places by simply contemplating visible things, accord-

ing to a natural logical process, has risen to a knowledge of invisible things, and has understood that upon this divine foundation should be built his life as an individual and as a social being, and that eternal life should be the end and object thereof, modern atheism is determined to destroy the Christian concept of life and the Decalogue itself, which is the natural law, written in the heart of man. Such an offense is so perverse that St. Paul declared that the pagans who did not believe in God were "inexcusable"; and Sacred Scripture proclaims: "The fool hath said in his heart: There is no God." Take away the Decalogue and see on what basis it shall be possible "to establish justice, insure domestic tranquillity"; on what basis the family shall rest, on what basis public decency, respect for the various kinds of authority, order among nations, the peace of civil society and fellowship.

#### SACRED DUTY OF CLERGY

It is necessary that the school of Christ put forth its best efforts in the case of the child, youth, individuals of every age, in the schools and with all those aids which the far-seeing Confraternity of Christian Doctrine furnishes. The Holy Father in his Encyclical *Divini Redemptoris* of March 19 invited the priests to be in the front rank in imparting this vital teaching. . . . It is, therefore, a sacred duty to bend every effort and devote the greater part of our time to the spreading of the Christian concept of life by means of that little book, which is within reach of all, the Catechism.

In the midst of such great spiritual ruin, in the midst of such great intellectual and moral laxity, souls terrified and hungering after justice turn to you, ask the bread of life, and direct to you the very same questions that the disciples once directed to Jesus of Nazareth: "Lord teach us to pray"; "Expound to us the parable"; "What shall I do that I may receive life everlasting?"; "To whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life."

Yes, to you priests they come and must come, because you represent Jesus Christ. The Apostles and their successors were responsible before God for their own times; we have the responsibility for our times; on us falls the obligation of teaching eternal truth, of combating religious ignor-

ance, and of rendering the Christian soul conscious of its dignity.

#### CATECHISTS' QUALIFICATIONS

Great things are expected of this Third National Catechetical Congress of the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine. The program touches every angle of religious instruction and treats of the various forms of the apostolate; the Bishops with paternal solicitude are giving powerful cooperation, as are the ability of the speakers and the fervor of all who are gathered together here from all parts of the country, priests, Sisters, and laity who have deserved well of this most choice form of Catholic action.

Let me be permitted to describe briefly the characteristic quality of the catechist, whether he be an ecclesiastic, a religious, or a layman. He speaks and teaches in the place of Jesus Christ; let him, therefore, be "the imitator of the Divine Teacher." Without a great love of God or without a great love of men, it is impossible to represent Christ or to make His doctrine understood. A proof of the love of God will be constant prayer, a sure guarantee, much more so than human talents, of stirring up in souls the inspiration of faith and of charity.

#### PREPARATION

Let the proof of the love of men and particularly of those who compose our Catechism classes be the most exact preparation. It is a question of taking the place of Jesus Christ and of imitating Him in breaking the bread of the Divine Word and in presenting the mysteries of God. The Fathers of the Church and the great Catechists, as one may see in their catechetical and apologetical works, were never through studying Sacred Scripture and Theology. What a splendid opportunity for us priests, for many perhaps the only one, of reviewing our Theological studies, with their arguments and proofs, of rendering them accessible to the minds of all, big and little, and of reconciling profundity of doctrine with the simplicity taught us by Our Lord in the Gospel. Those who combat the Faith study every means of succeeding therein, and their task is easy, because it is easy to destroy; we, on the contrary, must build, construct, help along souls in their spiritual progress. . . . May

the Lord be pleased to assist you in your discussions, and may He bless most bounteously all who at present or in the future cooperate in the development and advancement of the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine and of its apostolic activities and undertakings.

## The Yugoslav Concordat

A. CHRISTITCH

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**W**HATEVER the outcome of the present struggle between the Yugoslav Government and the Serbian Orthodox Church, it is safe to prophesy that it will mean a general weakening for the latter of her hold on the Serbian people, and a serious diminution of her prestige within the State. The campaign launched at the end of last year by the Serbian Orthodox Church against the ratification of the Concordat began, to all appearances, as the genuine, if misguided, opposition of the Holy Synod to a parliamentary measure which, it was alleged, encroached on the rights and privileges of the Orthodox Church and even placed the sovereignty of the State in jeopardy. A letter addressed to the Prime Minister by the late Patriarch Varnava in December contained a warning that, if the Government did not desist from their purpose of submitting the Concordat for ratification, the Orthodox Church would use every means at her disposal to protect herself.

This was the veiled threat of excommunication which Dr. Stoyadinovitch and his Orthodox colleagues had to face if they persisted in honoring the agreement with the Vatican signed on behalf of Yugoslavia on July 25, 1935, by Dr. Ludvig Auer, an adherent of the present parliamentary opposition led by Dr. Yevtitch. It must be borne in mind that this Concordat had actually been drafted during M. Yevtitch's tenure of office, that it had been personally supervised and endorsed by the late King Alexander, and that in January, 1935, a few months after the ghastly tragedy of the King's death, the then Premier, M. Yevtitch, had solemnly

declared before the assembled Parliament and Senate that "The Royal Government are deeply desirous of establishing permanent and genuine cooperation between the State and the Catholic Church by the conclusion of a Concordat with the Holy See." It was in pursuance of this policy that, as soon as Dr. Stoyadinovitch took over the Government in the summer of the same year, he appointed M. Auer as plenipotentiary for the Concordat, and there can be little doubt that, if the Yevtitch groupings had remained in power, the Concordat would have been signed under their auspices. Deprived of office, they helped to arouse the Orthodox Church against the ratification of the Concordat, and they have now succeeded in inflaming popular opinion amongst Orthodox Serbs to such an extent that an agitation which, nominally at least, began in defense of certain religious rights, has now developed into a political conflict of national and regional ideologies. That the Orthodox Church has allowed herself to be dragged into the maelstrom of party politics is bound to prove disastrous to herself in the long run. It used to be a proud boast of Orthodox Serbs that their Church kept aloof from political partisanship, and had never embroiled herself in affairs of State. There was no "clericalism," they used to say, about the Orthodox Church.

Today we see her lending her spiritual authority to an onslaught against a Government which is endeavoring to implement, not only pledges made by previous Governments but especially and above all the specific engagement of absolute equality for Catholics and Orthodox, which was a basis for the formation of the Southern Slav Kingdom when Serbs, Croats and Slovenes came together in 1918.

The status of the Catholic Church has, of course, been recognized all along in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, but her relations with the State were subject to the half-dozen Concordats drawn up at various periods in the past century between the Vatican and the different Slav provinces under Austro-Hungarian rule, and last but not least, between the Vatican and the respective Kingdoms of Serbia and Montenegro. Thus, diocesan boundaries did not correspond to the actual frontiers of the State; there were no uniform regulations concerning the appointment of Bishops; Agrarian Reform laws affected the Church unequally and often unfairly

in different parts of the country; and the rights as well as the obligations of seminaries and confessional schools in relation to the State had never yet been uniformly codified. Marriage laws, particularly on the question of mixed marriages, differed considerably throughout the Kingdom, and as long as such numerous anomalies persisted the Catholic Church in Yugoslavia hardly ranked, legally at any rate, as a single entity, and in consequence her position in the State was weakened.

Such a condition of affairs did not make for contentment among Catholics, nor for unity in Yugoslavia, and no one was better aware of this fact than King Alexander.

The Yugoslav Concordat, as it has now been passed in the Belgrade Skupshtina by 167 votes to 129, was largely the work of the late King. With boundless patience he studied its various aspects, determined (as I was privileged to hear from his own lips in 1934) that legitimate Catholic claims should be satisfied, and the welfare and unity of the State thus achieved. He foresaw that there would be opposition when the Concordat came before Parliament, but I think that he expected it more from the "liberals" of Croatia and Slovenia than from the Orthodox Serbs.

The allegation made by opponents of the Yugoslav Concordat that it constitutes a betrayal both of the State and of the Orthodox Church, is grossly unfair—to say the least—to the late King Alexander, and can only be repeated either in malice, or in deliberate ignorance of the facts. Indeed, the Yugoslav Concordat does not differ so very much from the Concordat ratified by the Serbian Parliament at Nish in 1915 during the invasion of Northern Serbia by the Austro-Hungarian forces. This Serbian Concordat still holds good, as the Prime Minister reminded Parliament the other day, and no one has ever opposed it. But the Serbian Concordat, which benefited a minority of Catholics in the pre-War Kingdom of Serbia, never constituted a danger to the Serbian Orthodox Church such as she foresees in the Yugoslav Concordat, which places the five and a half million Catholics in the country on an equal footing with six million Orthodox. The reason is not far to seek.

The Serbian Orthodox Church has always been a National Church, and she holds a magnificent record as champion of the Christian Faith during centuries of Turkish

oppression. Inextricably bound up with the Serbian nation, it is not easy for her to relinquish her prerogatives as the National Church in Yugoslavia.

The enactment of the Concordat denotes the official and general recognition that the Catholic Faith is as much a religion of national traditions in Yugoslavia as is the Orthodox Faith, and this is hard for Orthodox Serbs of the old school to accept.

The former system suited them for, as long as the Catholic Church in Yugoslavia continued to be regulated by regional agreements with the State, her position *de facto*, if not *de jure*, was that of a Church pertaining to a national minority. The Serbian Orthodox Church remained unassailable as the great national Church *in* (if not of) Yugoslavia. The late Patriarch Varnava (R.I.P.) was fond of referring to the great *national* rôle of the Serbian Orthodox Church in building up and consolidating the State. National could only mean Serbian in this case, and thus a certain pre-eminence for the Serbian factor in Yugoslavia could be maintained by means of the Orthodox Church. The Concordat does not, of course, actually interfere with the position of the Orthodox Church, whose status was legally enacted in 1930, nor is she even mentioned in the text of the Concordat. But as soon as this becomes law, Catholic Croats and Slovenes grow as important in the State as Orthodox Serbs, and this, in the minds of the members of the Holy Synod, in whose eyes Faith and nationality are inseparable, must needs damage Serbian Orthodox prestige.

Serbian Orthodoxy, thus so intimately bound up with national sentiment, depends on the patriotism of the Serbian element for the maintenance of religious observance and practise. The expansion of Serbian ideals to embrace a wider conception of loyalty to the Yugoslav fatherland is, therefore, a serious threat to the hitherto unique influence of the Orthodox Church which, in order to set on foot a spiritual revival, has always had to link it up with a manifestation of loyalty to a purely Serbian heritage. It was not difficult, therefore, for her to stir the hearts of the faithful in defense of their sacred Serbian Orthodox rights against the "encroachments" of Rome. Serbian Orthodoxy supported by the political opponents of the Government was thus able to arouse resentment, although curiously enough,



not so much against the Catholics in Yugoslavia as against the "Serbian traitors" in Government and in Parliament. Events, previous and subsequent to the ratification of the Concordat, have transformed what appeared to be a quarrel between the Churches into an internecine political contest amongst the Orthodox themselves.

Obviously Catholics as such have had nothing to say to the excommunication by the Holy Synod of the nine Orthodox Ministers, including the Prime Minister, who have felt it their duty to get the Concordat ratified. Moreover, the mainly Catholic Croats, with Dr. Matchek (not, by the way, a practising Catholic) at their head, took no part in this political action, although their leader, astute politician that he is, will doubtless use the present quarrel for the advancement of his own particular aims for Croatia—aims which he has never yet clearly enunciated.

So enraged have the Holy Synod and the opposition become, by the firmness of the Government in passing the measure, that they have not hesitated to stir up the feelings of the Orthodox masses by alleging that the late Patriarch was poisoned, but the vile rumor was readily disposed of by the publication of the medical certificate of the cause of his death—an internal malady which four years ago had brought him to death's door. However, the excommunicated Prime Minister and his colleagues are not unduly perturbed by having their names read from the pulpit. They are of opinion, and Canonists outside the Holy Synod support them, that the Church has no power to condemn them unheard. Moreover, the matter involved is purely political and is concerned neither with faith nor morals. And finally, valid excommunication requires the action of an actually-reigning Patriarch and is beyond the jurisdiction of a *locum tenens*.

Abused from platform and from pulpit, the Prime Minister goes on his way unperturbed, waiting for the subsidence of the artificially-created agitation before tackling the many new problems that have arisen and before submitting the ratified Concordat to the Senate. He knows that the character of the chief champion of Serbian Orthodoxy will not bear investigation since, himself a priest, this political agitator is liable to excommunication for having contracted a civil marriage. Judgment on his case has been

deferred for the present, but the facts are known and will ultimately have their effect on public opinion.

It is worth noting, as showing that the quarrel at present concerns the Orthodox only, that throughout this period of tension Catholics in Yugoslavia have not been molested in any way, even in purely Serbian regions—but, as mentioned above, the Serbian Concordat of 1915 guarantees full liberty to the Catholic Church.

Let us now consider briefly what are the chief objections put forward in Orthodox quarters against the Concordat of 1937. Only those articles are discussed to which grave exception has been taken.

Article I recognizes the right of the Catholic Church to exercise her spiritual mission freely and publicly throughout the triune Kingdom. Against this article the Orthodox urge that since Rome claims a mission to teach all nations she must needs proselytize to the danger of Orthodoxy. A minor objection, familiar to Catholics elsewhere, is the title Catholic, rather than Roman Catholic, which is used throughout the document.

Article II divides Yugoslavia into five Archdioceses, namely: Split, Zagreb, Sarajevo, Belgrade and Bar, with their respective suffragan Sees, all belonging to the Latin Rite, except the Greek-Catholic See of Krizevci in the Archdiocese of Zagreb in Croatia. This diocese of Krizevci exercises jurisdiction over all Catholics of the Greek Rite wherever they may be throughout Yugoslavia. Thus the Greek-Catholic parishes in Southern Serbia and in Bosnia now definitely come under the jurisdiction of the Bishop of Krizevci. The article further ordains that no portion of Yugoslavia shall come under the jurisdiction of any foreign Catholic Bishop, nor shall any Yugoslav Bishop include foreign territory in his See. Except that this makes the Catholics *seem* more national, it is hard to see what is the Orthodox quarrel with this enactment.

Article III is concerned with the appointment of Archbishops and Bishops by the Holy See, and provides that names of candidates be submitted by the Holy See to the Belgrade Government. Should the latter send no reply within thirty days, the Holy See will be justified in proceeding with the appointment.

The Orthodox Church complains that Rome has thereby been given too much freedom of action.

Article VI guarantees the freedom of direct intercourse with the Holy See for Bishops, priests and the Faithful. This, too, is resented by the Orthodox Church, whose privilege of intercourse with Churches abroad is confined to her Supreme Head.

Article VII guarantees full freedom of jurisdiction for Bishops over the priests of their dioceses. The same protection is to be accorded to priests in the exercise of their functions as to all civil servants. The seal of the confessional is to be respected, and the unwarranted wearing of clerical dress by the laity or by priests and Religious who have been forbidden to do so by ecclesiastical authority is to be penalized in the same way as the unwarranted wearing of military uniform. The Orthodox Church protests that the law which governs her own relations with the State does not grant her such privileges.

Article VIII, which, on the showing of the Vatican, was inserted at the request of the Yugoslav Government, prohibits political activity by the clergy. The Orthodox should welcome that.

Article XIII has aroused very bitter comment, for it guarantees the immunity of priests and Religious from arrest or criminal proceedings without previous report to their ecclesiastical superiors.

The Orthodox Church has never been given such privileges, declare the critics. This is true, but now, by ministerial decree, the Orthodox Church has been granted similar privileges and concessions, and, after all, why complain if the Catholic Church has demanded and obtained advantages which other denominations never sought?

Articles XXVI, XXVII and XXVIII deal with Catholic education in State and Confessional Schools.

Great objection is taken to the clause in Article XXVII which ensures that official school textbooks contain nothing offensive to the religious sentiments of the scholars. To appreciate the importance of this particular clause, one must bear in mind that history books and others have often in the past shown grievous bias against the Catholic Church.

Perhaps no Article of the Concordat has aroused more resentment than Article XXXII, which deals with marriages

celebrated in the Catholic Church in accordance with Canon Law. The proviso relating to mixed marriages, that *at the request of the injured Catholic party* the authorities shall enforce the *promise made* that the children be brought up in the Catholic Faith, is denounced as interference in home life! It is difficult to follow this argument. Moreover, mixed marriages hardly concern the Orthodox Church, considering that the late Patriarch had prohibited the performance of any mixed marriages, the non-Orthodox party being compelled to adopt the Orthodox Faith if the marriage was to be performed in the Orthodox Church. Exceptions have, indeed, been made occasionally in spite of this decree.

Article XXXIII, which guarantees the freedom of *Catholic Action* (a term grossly misunderstood), likewise arouses indignation.

Article XXXVII once again is made an excuse for indignation, for it specifies that all questions referring to ecclesiastical persons and matters which have not been dealt with in the previous Articles be solved in accordance with Canon Law. This, it is alleged, subordinates Yugoslavia to the Roman *curia*, and constitutes a relinquishment of the country's sovereign rights.

The final paragraph of this clause is apparently overlooked, for it clearly states that should any difficulties arise having a bearing on the State, the Holy See, or the Yugoslav Government, they will be approached in a friendly spirit by both sides for the purpose of reaching a satisfactory solution.

Obviously, the provisions of this Concordat are entirely satisfactory from the Catholic point of view, but what is not obvious is that a single one of these thirty-eight Articles encroaches in any way on the rights of the Orthodox Church or indeed of any other denomination. The special advantages and concessions in the temporal sphere which have been guaranteed to the Catholic Church are, moreover, now extended by ministerial decree to the other religious bodies. Accordingly, we feel safe in assuming that the ill-founded opposition of the Orthodox cannot be kept up once the true nature of the Concordat is known.